Dog

The Lord of Aizu sure is generous.
And everybody who fought at Ikedaya got a promotion in rank, too.
That's a huge cash bonus.
Is it really okay to accept this?
I think Kondou-san deserves the recognition.
Yeah, me too.

But now we have so many donated swords and clothes that we've got extra.
What are we gonna do with all that stuff?
Umm...

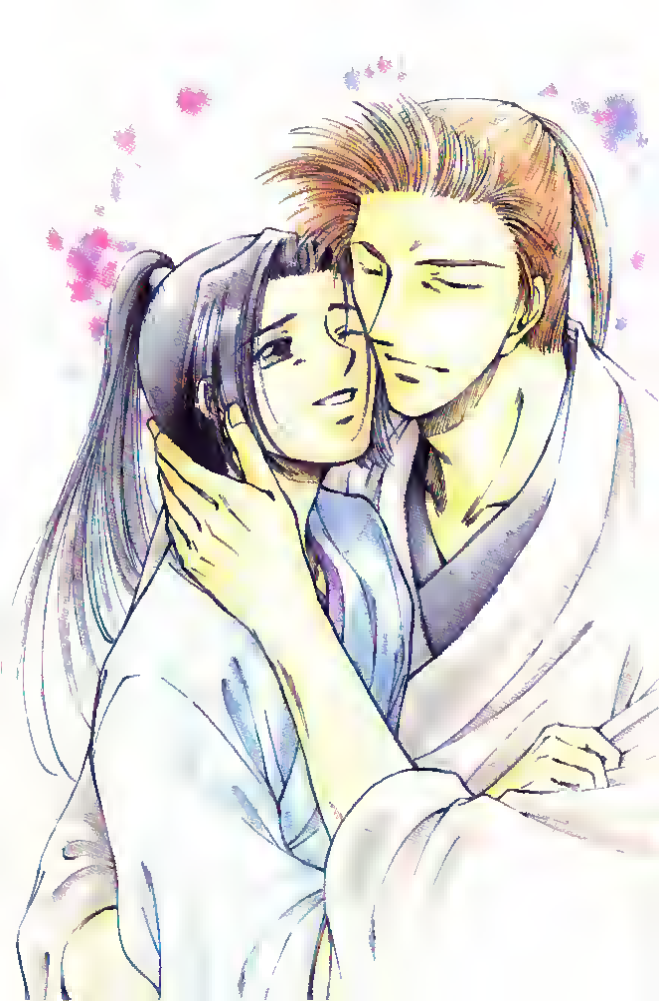
woof
woof
woof
I have no idea
woof
Hajsuke! Come here!
What does he want?
woof
woof
Huh?
Hai-suke!
Recap
The Choushuu loyalists who plotted to burn the Imperial Palace, kill the Aizu general and kidnap the Emperor back to the Choushuu Domain, were arrested at Ikedeya. But the reinforcements from Aizu never arrived.
Saitou Hajime
Shuntaichou Taichou
Okita Souji
Shuntaichou Taichou
Kondou Isami
Ishiyuki Gen Soui
Tsuchimi Kaisuke
Yokuchou Commander
Toudou Heisuke
Yokuchou Commander
Hirayama Sanosuke
Fukuchou Assistant Lieutenant
Hijikata Toshizou
Ukuchou Lieutenant
Yamanami Keisuke
Fukuchou Assistant Lieutenant
Yamaguchi Jirou
Inspector
Ohtsuki Genba
Ohtsuki Genba

HA
HA
HA
Saitou-kun!?
What the... you look so uncool!
Pant!
WOOF!
It's all yours.
Whatever.
ha ha ha
woof!

What are we supposed to do with a dog here?
What's with the dog? Are we keeping it?
Oooh, so Hajime got a puppy instead of a cash bonus?
But it was given to me by the Lord of Aizu.
In person!?
You saw the Lord of Aizu!?
WOOF!
I was joking. I haven't seen him.
But Saitou-kun, you never make jokes...

Did you see Kikuchiyo!?
Well, I just made one.
Hey, wait!
Woof
Oh...
Woof
Woof
Hey, what gives?
Woof
Souji?
Come on, be quiet
What's wrong?

You can't do that! He's Saitou's dog, and we're keeping him!
Huh?
Shut up, or I'll kick you!
I'll leave this to you...
Sai-tou-kun!!
Then he must have seen Kiku-chiyo
Saitou-kun went to see the Lord of Aizu!
Soujl what's wrong? You look like something's bothering you



I'm not letting that Saitou get away.
Hijikata-san!
Please let me go, Hijikata-san!
That's enough, come on!
Don't say that so loudly!
To
SFX: *pause*
Don't leave me like this!!
Hey!

SFX: "walking quickly"
If I cause a scene like I did before, I'll just draw even more attention to myself!
Too slow!
We were on our own...
Because we're being tested...?
Why weren't the Aizu soldiers there for us?
They didn't come...
What if...
If I don't keep moving, I'll miss my chances.

Our job...
As watchdogs for the Kyoto arm of the Shogunate...
Is to serve...
I just don't like him...
Saitou-kun said that he got that dog from the Lord of Aizu

Hijikata-san! I was talking about Saitou-kun!
I hope he's not running around town in a disguise again...
I've got loads of complaints for Matsudaira, but I never get invited to his estate...
sigh
So what kind of guy is he to get a private audience with the Lord of Aizu?
He's not the kind of guy who makes jokes.
But then he said it was a joke...
But
You're an honest, straight-forward kind of guy, and he's sneaky. He's not going to tell you the truth.

I keep thinking about Saitou-kun, and I still don't know anything at all about him
Where he's from...
His family...
Where he learned to fight
What motivates him...
So how can you hate a guy if you don't even know him?
It's not really a matter of liking or disliking him...
How can I say it...

Uneasy
He makes me feel
Honestly, I feel the same way about him, but I just give him missions and don't ask questions

So are you.
You're supposed to be an adult.

That's shameful!
And then I'd get in trouble
If you inquire too deeply about a guy like that, he'll just disappear

WHAT!?
Are you jealous?

You're acting weird.

But you're the one who always insists on knowing everything about everyone around here!
.....

You say that, but it sure feels that way.
What do you mean?

Well, maybe I am. you and Kikuchiyo are so close.

That's not true!
Think how I must feel you don't seem to trust me anymore

You act like that other guy is better than me.
It kinda bothers me that I'm not good enough for you.
It bothers you...?
I'm making you feel that way?
Well, you could be a little nicer to me.
Again with that

Even if I do, there's nowhere I'd rather be than here...
Do you ever regret the choices you've made?
I'm not...
I understand what prompted the Ikedaya incident...

I have the documents I need, so this concludes your assignment.
You've been reporting to me for some time.
Yes, sir.
What is it? You may go.
I have a question for you this time.
.....

He's testing us...
Your lordship was threatened as well.
On that day why did you not send Aizu soldiers to help us search for rounin?
He only wants to know...
You are not qualified to ask that question.
Like when Kikuchiyo was brought to the capital.
I should not ask questions that should not be asked.
How much we are worth to him.

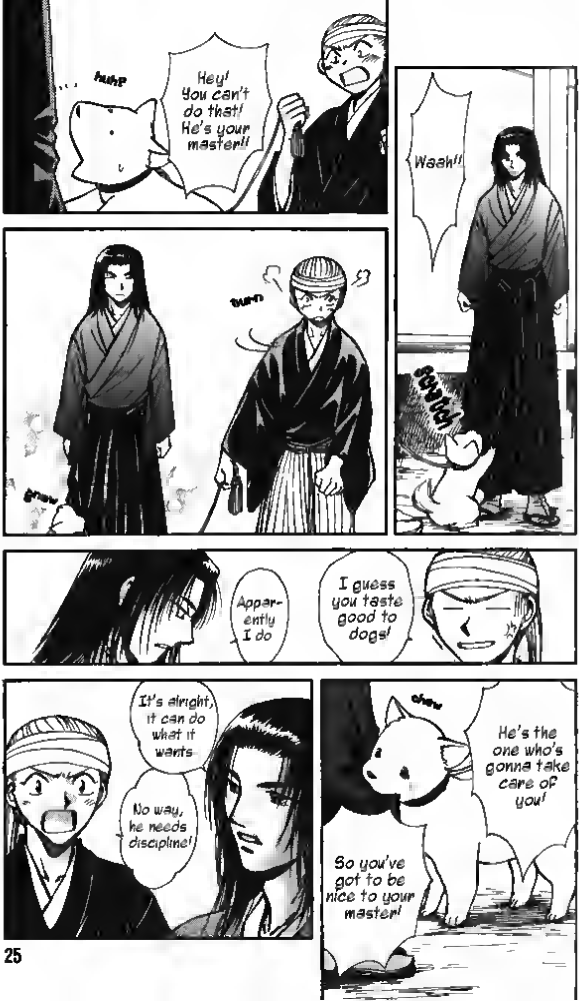
But there is such a thing as pushing your limits. "Saitou Hajime" can be made to disappear from this world.
You have always been able to spark freely with me.
...But... please.
SFX: *gritting teeth*
I could send you to Choushuu as an assassin, but it would be your funeral

But for now, please remember that you are Saitou of the Shinsengumi, and Kikuchiyo's personal guardian
Yes, sir
SFX: "chu"
SNAP
SFX: "swish"

Ah? What is it?
Please wait there
That's right, I did have one more assignment for you
I was given a Kishuu dog, and she had puppies. I can't keep them all.
Please, take a puppy with you.
I think it would suit you.
Thank you... I'll take good care of it

SFX "wag"

SFX "slip"


huh?
Hey! You can't do that! He's your master!!
Wash!!
turn
growl
scratch
Apparently I do
I guess you taste good to dogs!
It's alright, it can do what it wants
No way, he needs discipline!
chew
He's the one who's gonna take care of you!
So you've got to be nice to your master!

Really?
And I heard you have to be careful about what you feed him! "You are what you eat," right?
ギーコ
ギーコ
カン
カン
カン
SFX: "hemmering and sawing"
That looks good! Give it a try, Hajime!
I brought some left-overs.
Is this okay?
That's not how you do it!!
What!?
Here.
SFX: "clunk"
SFX: "jump"
SFX: "bang"

Why did we bother waiting for him?
Come on, Heisuke, aren't you getting too worked up about this?
Saitou's like a dog, there's no use telling him anything.
Y... yeah
CHOMP
CHOMP
Do you want to know what the Lord of Aizu really thinks about us?
Huh?

We're his retainers, aren't we?
But between Matsudaira-sama and Kondou-san and Hijikata-san,
I feel like there's a much stronger bond.
We're just his dogs.
Why do you say that?
It's not like you to say things like that, Saitou-kun.

Kondou-san and Hijikata-san...
They rely on you.
Even more than they rely on me.
I'm sorry if you're jealous, but
SFX "heartbeat"

Alright
Oy, Hajime, come hold this!
I...
I Feel like I've just seen Saitou-kun's weakness...
He's always so cold and strict and strong...
But even he's still human... there are still things that can hurt him...

Ichi-hei
Hahaha, that's easy to remember!
"Hajime" and "Ichi" are written with the same character!
He's your dog, Hajime, so you should name him
Huh?
And the "hei" is for "Heisuke"
That's so embarassing!
What!?
Aww~
Aww~

I know I'll be seeing a lot of new things from now on, but...
That can't be how you feel inside...
I wonder if I'll ever see you smile?
Hiji-kata-san!
It's a good name! Yeah! Ichihei!
Kinda sounds like a country bumpkin, though.
But it's okay, I kinda like it.
I don't know why you make that face...
THE END

The
Returning
Moon

He acted way too
Familiar with Kondou-san
(back then, I always called
Kondou-san "sensei")
I rememeber
I was twelve
years old.
That was when
he showed up
out of nowhere

More than anything, I can't stand people who treat me like a kid.
So of course that's what he did
CRASH!
AH!!
And I hated him...

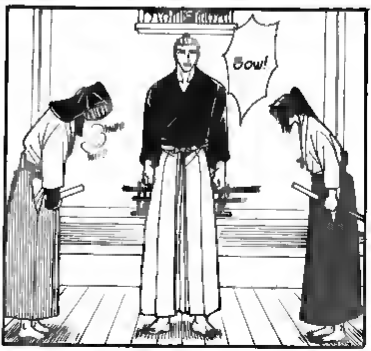
It's a little excessive, but I guess if someone gets hurt, it's their own fault...
Even if they're only sparring with bamboo shinai, they're really going at it.
SFX: *battle sounds*
Ah!!
What should we do, Toshi-san?

A Famous Bakumatsu-era Restaurant in Kyoto

Hosaburou: A restaurant specialising in dishes from the capital, the building became a shelter during the Battle of Toba-Fushimi. Bullet holes can still be seen in the walls today. There's a train station nearby, but I was surprised at how busy the area is. You can't really see from outside the entrance, but there's a very charming little garden inside. Lately, though, most of the old shops in the vicinity have been torn down to build houses, so it looks a bit lonely.

WHAT!?
Oh, it's probably Souji.
Sounds like a pretty good fight, even IF they are just using shinai
You know how Souji is, he just wanted a little exercise...
I TOLD HIM TO REST!
Wait!!
Don't be so angry at him!!
Toshi-san!!

SFX: *whoosh*



Thank you so much!
Okita-taichou!
Oh no, thank you!
Thank you! It's been so nice meeting you!
I'll help you work on your technique!
Why don't we practice together again some-time?
I've been taking it easy for a while, so this is a great way to get back in shape!
But I'm so weak, I'm no challenge at all.
Me next!
Heisuke! Where did you come from?
You can't fight! That wound could open up again!

SOUJI!!
Hijikata-san!?
Huh?
Fuku-chou!
Huh?
SFX "approaching footsteps"
ダン ダン ダン ダン ダン
Ow! Let go!
Quit it!
SFX "slam"
GRAB
SHUT UP!!
It's so un-cool
Please let me go, Hijikata-san... people are watching
Oww!
SFX "slam"

But I'm feeling much better!
I just wanted to get back to training
That's right
I know you told me to rest for at least a month...
I guess everyone else thinks that you just have a lingering cold and that you'll recover in no time
But I know..
You were coughing blood...
Please, stop!

I remember how it tasted
Please
Your blood was on my hands
Please, stop!
You're sick. You coughed blood
You can't run from this.

Souji!
SFX 'shove'
SFX 'slam'
I'll talk to you later if I've got time.
No. It was nothing like that.
What's wrong?
Were you two fighting?
Yama-nami

I'll keep an eye on him for you.
Thanks
I guess I'm the same way— he just wants to get up and do something.
He's always been like that.
But—
He's a damned Fool.

Shinoda is still out on patrol, sir!
Oh, I see Thank you.
phew!
phew!
phew!
The Next Day
Hey, is Shinoda-kun here?
Okita-taichou!
I wonder if Hijikata-san said something to him...
That's too bad... I guess he can't come practice with me like we talked about yesterday...
SFX: *chatter*
SFX: *moving quickly*
Are they badly hurt!?
Two men have been attacked!

Wh... who is it!?
There's nothing I can do.
So they must have been those who escaped Ikeda-ya.
We heard them cry out that it was "revenge for Miyabe-dono."
We were thrown into confusion, and before we knew it, we had been surrounded by ronin.
What happened here?
Two units were singled out and attacked.

Thank you so much!
It's been so nice to meet you!
Ah...
Huh?
Okita-kun?
Souji!!

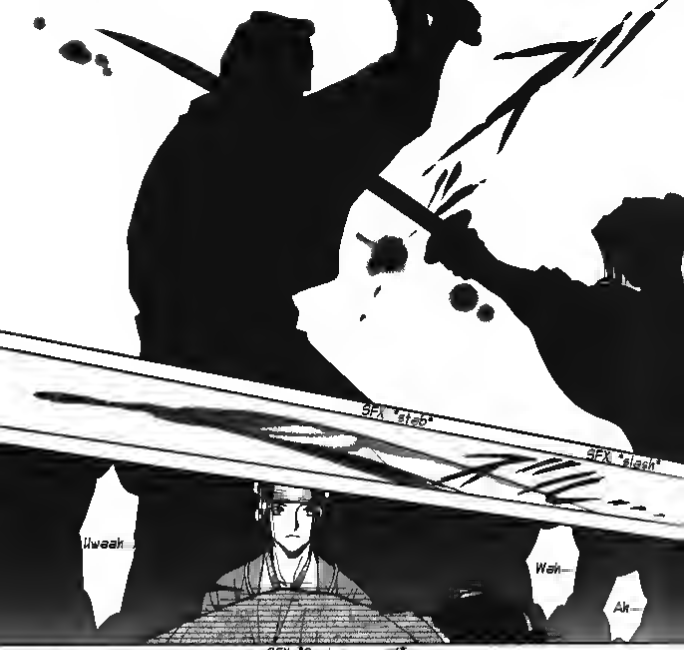
SFX "grab"
What do you think you're doing?
SFX: "whoosh"

I'm going out on patrol.
No you're not!
If I had been there, he wouldn't have been killed.
Don't act so full of yourself!
Do you really think I'm exaggerating?

I'm going.
Wait!
Fuck
Toshi-san!
Fukuchou! Where are you!?
Hey! Anybody who can, Follow Okita!
At least five men!
No, more!

Damn it... I knew it wouldn't be over so easily...
SFX: *moving*
And by chasing them, Souji might just agitate them even more...
It's getting dark.
I guess he intends to lure them out by going alone...
It looks like you've found me.
But for what?
How far can he keep chasing them?

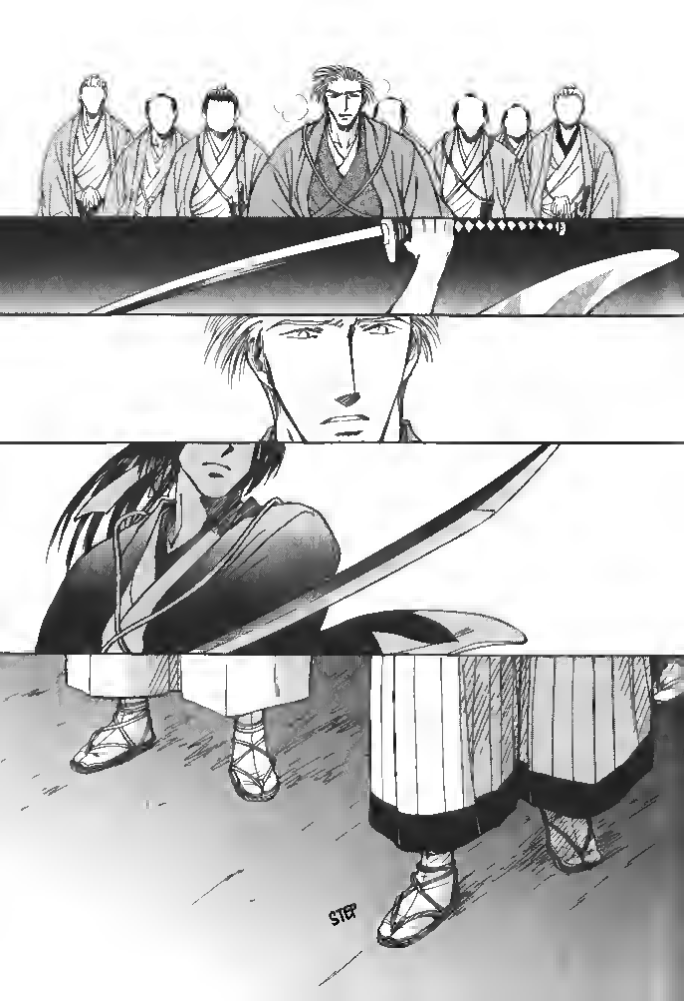
So you thought you could lure us out?
But you're all alone...
I don't care how strong you are!
You shogunate dogs will pay for killing our comrades!
We'll take your life in exchange!
Are you finished talking yet?
Let's end this.
What's one kid going to do!?
SFX "ara"
SFX "lunge"



SFX: "Fast movement"

Fukuchou! Look!

Souji!
Fuku-chou
...I should have known he wouldn't tell anyone what he was doing...


STEP

His sword has changed.
He's changed.
But he knows his disease will kill him.
He doesn't have time.
Until now, he still had that gentleness.
But until now.
A sword can hold no gentleness.

Are you sleeping?
Hiji-kata-san?
No
Fukuchou! We have to help!
It will all be over soon.
SFX "breathing hard" SFX "slash"

I figured you'd come
Sorry about today...
I must have worried you.
You always apologise, but you still do what you want to do.
Hijikata-san

Don't change.
So promise me
I will...
Stay who you are.
Mm
How sneaky you can be
And we both know

There's just a sliver of moon missing... it reminds me of back then...
When was that?
Back when we were at Shieikan
And you had just come back to Edo.
It was when we first met.
Huh...?

I challenged you to a duel, but you never showed up.
I waited and waited, but you never came.
So I just kept glaring up at the moon.
Oh yeah, I remember that... I couldn't believe a kid wanted to fight me.
I was off drinking with a girl.
You're so mean!
Now, the moon will waste away a little each night.
But it always grows full again

I envy the moon...
Back then I never imagined that I'd ever look at the moon and feel this way...
Who could have known?

Maybe I'll feel better in the morning.
I'm sorry.
THE END